

Amendments to the Specification:

Please make the following amendments to the specification (material to be inserted in replacement paragraphs or sections is in **bold and underline**, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]]).

Please insert the following Summary paragraph into the specification at page 1, line 12, and please move the subject matter initially presented at page 1, line 12 so that it follows the Summary paragraph:

Summary

The present disclosure describes stage assemblies and methods of using an optical microscope. The stage assembly is mountable on an optical microscope for orienting a sample into a desired focal position and includes an X-axis plate operable for rectilinear shifting in the X-axis direction and a Y-axis plate mounted on the X-axis plate operable for rectilinear translation in the Y-axis direction. A Z-axis plate is mounted on the XY plate assembly for carrying a sample to be investigated and a piezoelectric actuator mechanism is interposed between the XY plate assembly and the Z-axis plate operable for rectilinear translation of the Z-axis plate.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 5 with the following replacement paragraph:

In Fig. 3, there is shown an end view, of the components just described, illustrated in an exploded view to show their positioning relative to an optical microscope's objective lens. The optical microscope's stand or base, indicated at 16, supports a turret 32 and the microscope's objective (only one being shown) is indicated

at 12. A stationary bottom plate indicated at 36 is mountable on the base, and is dimensioned for receiving X-axis plate 22, and Y-axis plate 24 is shown with piezoelectric actuators indicated at 40 and 42. As will be described, there are three piezoelectric actuators, and they are connected to engage the underside of flanged portions extending along the length of Z-axis plate 28. The stage insert is shown at 30, including its recess 31 for receiving therewithin a slide 33, for example. As mentioned previously, for optical microscopes in which the objective lens is located below the slide 33, each of the components, such as bottom plate 36, X-axis plate 22, Y-axis plate 24, Z-axis plate 28 and stage insert 30 are open in their internal regions; **these internal openings allow for the passage of transmitted light and** [[for]] viewing of the sample carried on the slide or other holder 33 by the below-mounted objective lens.